

What it's Like to Participate in Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs)

The MMI is designed to assess communication skills, specifically verbal and nonverbal skills that cannot be measured by standardized exams or transcripts. The MMI typically consists of six to 10 very short interviews that revolve around a specific scenario.

By Aspiring Docs

What is a Multiple Mini Interview or MMI?

The Multiple Mini Interview (MMI), developed by McMaster University, is an interview format that consists of a series of six-10 interview stations, each focused on a different question or scenario. The MMI is designed to measure competencies like oral communication, social and non-verbal skills, and teamwork that are important indicators of how an applicant will interact with patients and colleagues as a physician.

Why do some admissions committees use this format?

Based on the research, schools using the MMI format believe it produces a more reliable assessment of a candidate and limits interview biases due to the number of interactions. Because students interact with multiple interviewers in multiple assessments over the course of the MMI, opinions of a single interviewer are not over-emphasized. The MMI allows applicants multiple opportunities to showcase their skills throughout the interview, unlike the traditional one-on-one interview. "We appreciate the process is grounded in theory, supported through research, and has continually allowed us to support our goal of having true community involvement in our admission decisions," says Glen T. Fogerty, PhD, Associate Dean of Admissions & Recruitment, at the University of Arizona College of Medicine- Phoenix.

What is the format? How long does it take?

Typically, a series of six-10 “mini” interviews are conducted over a period of nearly two hours. Each mini interview includes a two-minute prep period before engaging in a conversation that lasts between five to eight minutes.

“The MMI benefits students in many ways that perhaps other formats do not. Not only does the student know the topic that will be discussed, but also has time to prepare a response before walking into the room, unlike other formats wherein questions can be asked on the spot from any subject area. Additionally, the student has the unique opportunity to make multiple first-time impressions. If one question is tough and the student does not feel they performed well, the next room is a new chance to do better without any previous bias,” says Tara K. Cunningham, Ed.D., M.S., Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Diversity at the Texas Christian University and University of North Texas Health Science Center School of Medicine.

Dr. Cunningham recalls countless applicants sharing their experience and echoing this belief, feeling more confident that they had a better chance to demonstrate a more “well-rounded self” than what may be the case in a single interview.

What kind of topics are covered in the MMI?

As with any interview, the MMI is designed to assess verbal and non-verbal communication skills as well as provide additional information that is helpful in assessing a student’s readiness for medicine.

Glen T. Fogerty, PhD, adds, “Topics covered are wide-ranging and individualized toward each medical school’s end goal. Some schools seek out critical thinking skills, some ask about current events, others put an emphasis on role playing, and some may just open it up and see where the conversation goes. No matter the topic or the conversation, all medical schools are seeking strong cultural fits so do your homework before walking in that door!”

What is the best way to prepare for the MMI?

The MMI does not test specific knowledge. The format is designed to allow candidates to showcase their interpersonal and critical thinking skills. The best way to prepare is to practice expressing yourself articulately and logically in a timed environment.

According to an applicant who completed the MMI, “I felt like the MMI allowed the interviewers to get responses that couldn’t be so easily prepared for in advance, thus giving them a very realistic picture of the applicant and enabling them to make better decisions. I felt prepared to show who I am in everyday life!”

Possible interview stations:

- Scenarios involving interactions with an actor or a medical school's standardized patient
- An essay writing station; this station may take longer than the others
- A standard interview station
- A teamwork station where candidates must work together to complete a task
- An ethical scenario involving questions about social and policy implications
- A "rest" station to help students catch their breath and relax



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